

Rep. Lesia Liss (District 28) - Birthmother's Testimony

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To: <lesialiss@house.mi.gov>
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Subject: Birthmother's Testimony

I will not be able to attending the hearings on March 24th but I thought I would send what I would tell the committee if I could attend.

My name is Lisa Walker, and currently live in Miamisburg, Ohio. In April 1979 I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl that I decided to place up to adoption. I was 16 years old and scared out of my mind and with the support of my family the decision was made. Making that choice was the hardest thing that I have ever done in my life. I could spend hours talking about my feelings and emotions but that is not why I'm here. I'm here to support the opening of these adoption records. I spent 30 years wondering what and if and then one day last October I got an email stating that my daughter was looking for me and she had my name. Three days later I had a name and phone number. I discovered that she began her search for me in 1997 and my heart fell. She spent years looking but ran into dead ends since my family had left the state years before and my last name was not the same. I always thought that when she turned 18 she would be given the information she needed if she choose that. I had left the State of Michigan in 1980 and never knew that I had to sign any consent form. As a young girl I was not given any of that information and the needless pain that has caused in inexcusable. You get more documents/information when you purchase a new car than when you place your child up for adoption. Birth mothers are left with nothing but the memories and if lucky a birth photo. The shame and guilt has kept me silent all these years. I have watched as my brother has been searching for his birth family for more than 20 years, only to discover that he birth mom passed away several years ago. He was lucky to find some siblings and his sister tells him that she was never the same after that and that she always wondered. People are dying not knowing all in the name of privacy? -Privacy that most of us did not want or ask for. In my case there was no privacy because Catholic Social Services transferred documents with my name left on: Lisa Hofmann. The adopted mother told me that she knew someone made a mistake. I have been blessed to have found my daughter and I finally have found peace about what I did all those years ago. People have the right to know and they can choose to have a relationship or not. We are talking about adults who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. The right to find the peace we all deserve!

Thank you for you time and consideration.

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